

Spicy Belle

By
CAMPBELL MACLEOD

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Farnsworth, the hero of Mrs. Gilder's reception, was nowhere in sight. The lady in question was puffing her way through the crowded parlors in search of him.

It was half past 10 o'clock, and the reception was in full blast, but Farnsworth had suddenly disappeared. The hostess was asking if anybody had seen him.

Half an hour earlier the lion of the function had found himself alone. A debutante who hissed had reduced him to a state of cold perspiration. He had started recklessly down the hall. A door had stood invitingly open. He had walked in, hoping it gave on a porch. It had proved quite the most attractive spot he had seen since he had left the jungles of South America a month ago and had found himself famous as the author of a book on "Unknown Amazon Lands."

This room was green and cool. A bank of palms concealed a piano. Behind the piano was an open window. Here he could indulge in a cigarette. Good! As he scratched the match a faint exclamation of surprise from the far corner drew his attention in that direction. A young girl was observing him with calm amusement.

"I beg your pardon," he began, throwing away the cigarette. "I didn't mean to intrude."

"Don't mind me," she begged. "Were you running away?"

"I'm afraid so," guiltily and glancing furtively at her.

She was a very young person, almost a child. Her dress was faint pink, and she idly thrummed the banjo in her lap. He realized that she was exceedingly good to look upon.

"Won't you sit down?" she invited, motioning to the seat beside her.

"Why are you hiding here?" he demanded. "You aren't afraid of them, are you?"

"I'm not one of the guests," cheerfully. "I'm an entertainer. The time appointed for my stunt," holding up the banjo, "hasn't arrived yet."

"I see," reflectively. "But what are you doing here alone?"

"It was cool and unoccupied, and I slipped in, maybe for the same reason that you did."

"If I won't disturb your practicing, may I stay?" he surprised himself by asking. "My name is Farnsworth."

"Oh," she gasped, pointing to the door. "It's your reception, given for you. Of course you can't stay!" again pointing to the door.

"But I mean to stay," very determinedly. "I didn't catch your name."

"The girl laughed deliciously. "Spicy Belle Browning. What are you laughing at? Though people generally do laugh."

"It is rather a startling name," he admitted. "I don't think I ever heard it before."

"My old ma'am named me. My mother died when I was born. The Spicy part was after the pink in the garden. And we had an old cow named Belle—maybe that's where that part came from. Grandmother was too heartbroken to care what they called me."

She was tapping her pink shoe foot to the strains of the distant music. "Let me see, you've been away, haven't you?" Her finger tapped her forehead in an effort to remember. "What was it you did?"

"Nothing of any consequence," he returned lightly. "Sing to me, won't you?"

The girl crossed the banjo with loving fingers.

"You'd like the old songs," she announced suddenly. "I don't sing them for many."

She began in a voice like red roses, too low to escape the walls of the tiny room, singing something about Juanita and waking from a dream too soon. "Be my own fair bride," the soft voice trailed—and stopped suddenly.

"Mrs. Gilder!" she gasped. "They don't know where I am! Maybe it's my turn!"

"I'll help you find her," he rose, and together they made their way down the long crowded hall. Mrs. Gilder fairly gobbled up the disappearing her. She listened vaguely when he began his apologies and turned with a trifle more consideration to the girl who stood at his elbow. Farnsworth was more interested apparently in finding out when this young person's turn came than he had been in all the brilliant conversation fired at him during the earlier part of the evening.

"She'll have time to dance with me one time before she goes on, won't she?" he begged.

Until they reached the ballroom door he forgot that he hadn't danced in ten years.

"This is a beastly thing to thrust on you," he said. "I have not danced since—since you were an infant. You understand, it was my only chance to get you away from her. Did you ever try to talk small conversation to young ladies who hissed?"

Spicy Belle laughed.

"I mean young ladies—er—what do I mean—who are in society as—er—er—a profession?"

meaning of stage fright later beside the debutante daughter of his hostess, waiting for Spicy Belle to come on. A stage had been erected at the far end of the immense music room. But when she did come, as cool as when she sat beside him in the little green room, his courage returned. She twanged her banjo and tuned it as unconcernedly as if she were alone. The music now was very different from that she had played to him. It was society love songs and quaint plantation melodies, odd dances and an occasional negro dirge. The bored society people were murmuring something about her talent. Farnsworth heard, as in a dream, the girl beside him babbling of the immense sums that had been offered Miss Browning to go on the vaudeville stage. That thought brought sudden and great consternation to his heart.

"Really, I can't say," his hostess drawled when he finally managed to place her daughter with "another and handsomer man," as he explained in leaving her—"I can't say where Miss Browning is. No, I don't know her address even. I have so many poor girls on my list. I try to help the most deserving."

Farnsworth was gone. He had caught a glimpse of a tiny pink foot under a long gray cloak, the wearer being followed by an ancient negress and the two slipping out of a side door.

"Wait for me!" he called.

Spicy Belle laughed.

"I forgot to say," he fell in with her step. "Oh, I say, tell the old person back there," motioning to the deuce, "not to listen. It's this way. We've been pretty frank with each other this evening, haven't we? You see, I've been away from civilization so long it's rather awkward for me to try to learn the roundabout way people in the polite world make love. I'm not going to tell you about my love tonight," as the girl drew back frightened at his intensity. "You know I have a feeling that this is the last reception that either of us will ever attend."

Spicy Belle laughed.

"You've got no more business with them than I have," he indicated the brilliantly lighted house in the rear.

"You were made for the big places, the silent places, the warm nights, heavy with the fragrance of flowers, that these people, with all their yellow gold, can't buy. You were born to sing love songs under the tropic stars. Wait a minute! Yes, you can. Send her on to the house if you don't want her to hear what I am saying to you. Listen, then you may go. I'll have to cut back there and show up to say good night. I'm going back to South America tomorrow, and you're going with me—to be my own fair bride, you hear? It's too cramped in the United States for a fellow that's outgrown civilization. You can't get your breath. I can't! Spicy Belle, Spicy Belle! That's a tropical name. Wait a minute, then I'll let you go. No, I'm not going to listen! You'd kiss me if I told you to, Spicy Belle, but I'm not going to tonight! I'll be here early in the morning, and morning means the early hours of the day, you understand that, Spicy Belle? We'll talk over the final arrangements then. Are you going of your own free will or are you going to force me to take you a la Sabine?"

"Why shouldn't I go?" came from the folds of the long cloak in which Spicy Belle had hidden her face. "I—I—I love you!"

Disclosed in a Dream.

Maculish in his book on sleep tells a story of a man who was sued for a debt, originally contracted in the lifetime of his father and, as the man thought, settled by him, but of such settlement he could find no trace among his papers. After searching a long time to no purpose he went to bed with the determination of giving up the fight and making the best compromise he could. He dreamed that his father came to him in his sleep and told him that he had paid the debt and that he would find the papers in the possession of a certain solicitor. His father added that he could remind the lawyer of the case by the incident that they could not get change for a Portuguese piece of money and had to drink it up in a tavern. The man awoke and went immediately to see the solicitor in question, whom he found an old man. At first he denied all remembrance of the case, but at mention of the Portuguese money the whole event came back to him, and after some trouble he found the papers that were needed, thus saving the man from heavy loss.

Slightly Mistaken.

The official in charge of the grounds at Mount Vernon not long ago came upon a woman kneeling before a building not far from the monument. She was bathed in tears. Thinking that the lady was in trouble, the director gently inquired whether he might be of service to her.

"No, thank you," sobbed the woman. "I am not in trouble, but my patriotic feelings overcame me when I first gazed upon the tomb of the Father of His Country."

"Pardon me, madam," said the director, with a smile, "but you have made a slight mistake. This is not the tomb of Washington, but his ice house."—New York Times.

A Perambulating Pudding.

A commuter who lives up the Hudson river and who is, of course, accustomed to go downtown every morning contributes a specimen of Finnish humor to the New York Sun. By the commuter's confession he is prone to prow around the refrigerator almost every night and quietly dispose of any unconsidered trifle that may tempt his appetite without publishing the same to the household at large. Recently his wife was discussing luncheon with a new importation from Finland named Hilda and, remembering a pudding that they had not been able to finish the day before, said to the kitchen autocrat:

"Do you know where that piece of cold pudding is?"

Without a smile on her face Hilda answered:

"Yes, ma'am. It has gone downtown!"

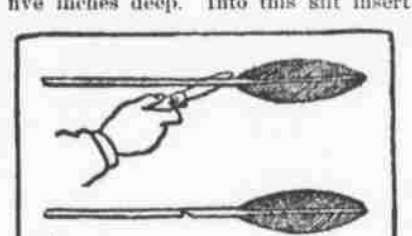
FOR YOUNG FOLKS

A SLING DART.

It is Easy to Make and Not Difficult to Manipulate.

This toy is one that is easily made from material within the reach of every boy. A pine stick two feet long and one-half inch thick, two brads, a piece of pasteboard or stiff card five inches long and two wide, an ash stick three feet long and a piece of stout string constitute all the material necessary.

Whittle your pine stick perfectly straight and round, a little larger in diameter than a lead pencil. With a small saw cut in one end a slit about five inches deep. Into this slit insert



HOW THE DART IS MADE.

the piece of card, first cutting it the shape shown in the picture. Tack it on with two or three brads, clenching them on the other side to insure their firmness. When this is done, and not before, balance the dart on your knife blade to find the "center of gravity" and at the point where it balances cut a notch slanting in the direction of the point away from the card end.

If you cut this notch in the center or near the end, the dart will not work. It must be just where it balances. Be sure you get this notch right, for on it depends the success of the toy.

The dart being finished, the next thing is to construct the lash to throw it with. A piece of ash or some springy wood is better for this purpose, but pine or spruce will do. Cut this about three feet long and the diameter of a fly handle, so you can handle it comfortably in the hand, yet thin and springy, tapering toward the end. To the small end of this stick fasten a piece of stout string about two feet long, and at the other end of the string tie a knot.

To shoot the dart hold it with the left hand near the tail or paper end, holding the whip in the right. Throw the string over the dart and draw it through the notch until it catches on the knot. Then with a rapid upward motion switch the whip into the air, letting go the dart at the same time. The dart will leave the string and soar high into the air.

The lighter the dart is made and the more springy the whip the higher the dart will fly. Be correct in your aim, and you may learn to hit the mark as well as did the oldtime slingers. But be careful not to break windows or "smash things" in your training.—Exchange.

Ten Strokes.

Here is a good thing for the boys and girls to amuse themselves with in the evening, when the lamp is lighted on the library table and everything is nice and cozy. Make for each person in the party or family a copy of the following ten questions and tell them that the answers are ten words, each ending in "sting." A price may be offered for the first correct answer handed in: 1. A sting that cures fatigue? 2. A sting that cures hunger? 3. A sting that cleans your room? 4. A sting that cooks your meals? 5. A sting that makes you laugh? 6. A sting that comes from vain people? 7. A sting that injures your knife? 8. A sting that browns your bread? 9. A sting that makes you enjoy a book? 10. A sting that shopkeepers dislike? The answers are: Resting, feasting, dusting, roasting, jesting, boasting, rusting, toasting, interesting, trusting.

The Pin Race.

Place two rows of pins on the carpet, one on each side of the room. The pins should be six inches apart. Then, at the word of command, the two players are to pick up one pin at a time, return with it and place it in a bowl. The one who has picked up all the pins first, of course, wins. There is no stipulation as to which pin is to be first picked up. Counters may take the place of pins, or nuts would do. But pins are best because of the difficulty in picking them up. Some fun may be made by guessing who will be the winner in the pin race.

How Reeds Are Harvested.

The reed cutter is armed with a special kind of short scythe. To get to the reeds he has to wade out armpit deep or deeper into the river, and he cuts away at the reeds under water. Then, when he has cut a good supply, he has to tow the reeds ashore, and there they are dragged up on the land, stacked on carts, dried and harvested till the time comes for their use.—Country Life.

Indoor Sun.

Once on a time in far Japan there lived a busy little man. So merry and so full of fun that people called him Indoor Sun.

Now, Indoor Sun made mirrors fine like those in your house and in mine. And in these looking glasses bright his own face saw from morn till night.

It made him feel so very sad To see his face look cross and bad That he began to take great care To keep a sweet smile always there.

And soon he found that those he knew All seemed to like him better now. For, like the mirrors, every one Began to smile on Indoor Sun.

Now, try this just one day and see How bright and smiling you can be. You'll find both happiness and fun In playing you're an Indoor Sun.

—Little Folks.

The Road to Slumber Town. Rock-a-bye, rock-a-bye, to and fro! This is the way the horses go. Galloping, galloping, up and down, Along the road to Slumber Town.

Rock-a-bye, rock-a-bye, very steep They find the Hill of Half Sleep. Now they are taking a good long rest Just in sight of Cradle Nest.

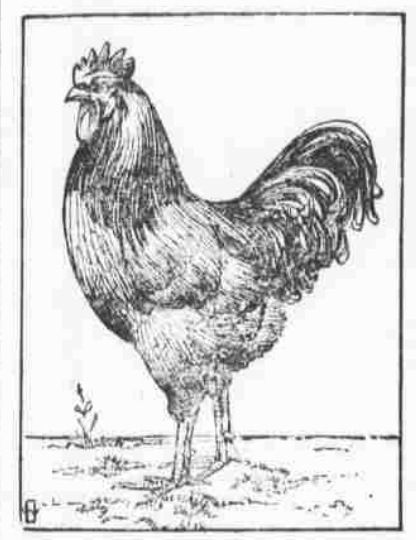
LIMBER NECK.

How This Bane of the Poultry Yard May Frequently Be Cured.

Limber neck is the result of ptomaine poisoning of some kind, says the Featherer. Decayed meat full of maggots is the usual cause. Some claim that the live maggots moving about in the crop so irritate it as to communicate through the nerves to the brain and cause the peculiar twist of the neck. No matter what the real cause may be, whether it is the meat or the maggots, the ptomaine poison taken into the system paralyzes the brain and causes the trouble. The surest relief from this is by mixing a tablespoonful of turpentine in an equal amount of warm water and pouring the same into the crop. Follow this with warm water until the crop is nearly filled. Take the fowl up by the feet, head down, and gently work the entire contents of the crop into a box partially filled with earth. The reason for using the box of earth is so that the refuse of the crop may be buried deep away from any possibility of other fowls or dogs consuming it. Wash the crop out in this way two or three times if necessary. When thoroughly cleansed, administer a tablespoonful of warm castor oil and leave the fowl in a quiet, cool place by itself to recover. It is always best to confine it to itself, so that the place may be thoroughly cleansed after the fowl has recovered or died, whichever may be the outcome of the treatment. If not too many are attacked, destroy the alling ones, burning or burying the carcasses. To prevent all this never permit putrid meat of any kind to lie about for fowls, pigeons, dogs or children to eat, as it is likely to injure them the same as it does the fowls.

A Fine Example of His Breed.

The Buff Plymouth Rock cock here with illustrated is perhaps as close to the ideal as any of his breed ever produced in the United States, the home of the Buff Plymouth Rock. Because of the admixture of Buff Cochins blood necessary to produce the color this variety has not until recently acquired that distinctiveness of shape and markings and the tendency to breed true to them that are considered necessities. But today the Buff Plymouth



BUFF PLYMOUTH ROCK MALE.

Rock often wins in the large shows in competition with buff fowls of all breeds. The feathers on the legs have disappeared entirely except on the scrubbed specimens, and there is no more hardy or better utility fowl in existence now than the Buff Plymouth Rock. The illustration shows how one of these birds should look. There should not be the blocky shape of the Wyandotte. That is something to be carefully avoided, for Plymouth Rock shape must be preserved at all costs. Then there must not be the long, straight body of the Dorking, which is as objectionable as the short body of the Rhode Island Red, which is good only in its place. Bred as close to the type shown in the illustration as possible, and you will not go far wrong, no matter what variety of Plymouth Rocks you may be interested in.

Low Roosts For Growing Fowls.

Low roosts must be provided for growing fowls and their houses kept scrupulously clean. If it is unsafe to leave houses open at night, cover windows and door frame with poultry netting. While it may not be as harmful as some suppose to crowd grown fowls in cold weather, it is certainly a grave mistake to crowd growing fowls. By disposing of the culs and all hens over two years old there will be more room for the pullets. If there be not enough room then and one is unable to build another house, cull again more closely. It is much better to do this than to have a lot of runty, undeveloped pullets eating food and laying no eggs all winter. No amount of care will ever make a stunted fowl a paying proposition.

Exhibit Your Poultry.

Be sure to attend some of the poultry shows and study poultry from an exhibitor's standpoint. It is an object lesson that will be well worth the time and expense necessary. Better yet, take some of your birds and show them in competition with others. If you do not win, it will give you an opportunity to compare them with the winners and ascertain where they are defective, giving you an idea how to improve them.

Cull Carefully.

It is impossible to cull your flocks too closely. Always draw from the poor quality for market purposes and to sell. Never permit the best and most valuable to go from your possession unless it is in the way of an exhibition specimen, which perhaps can be as well spared from your flocks as not. What you should hold fast to are the most vigorous, most profitable producers, and cultivate them for future results.

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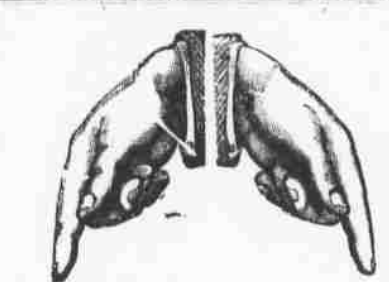
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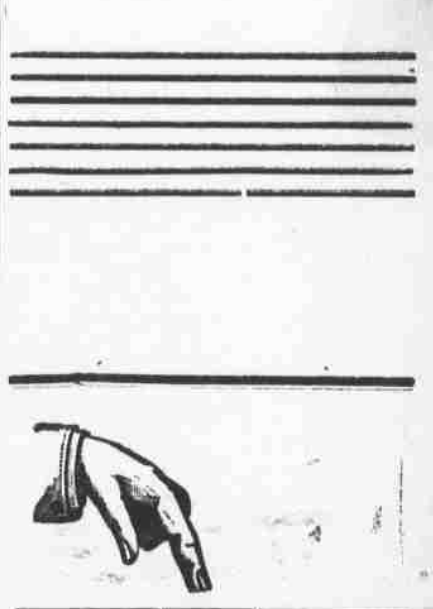
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